

A
PRESERVATIVE
Against
False Teachers,

O R,
A Treatise discovering false Teachers,
by their Tenets and Practises,

Also,
Arguments grounded upon the word of God,
proving that it is unlawfull to goe to the separated
Congregations to hear the Ministers
thereof.

By SAMPSON TOWNSEND.

Mat. 7. 15.

Beware of false Prophets.

Mark. 4. 24.

Take heed what yee heare.

There is no plague more hurtfull to the Church, then when the Wolves
creep in, in sheeps cloathing. *Calvin on Iohn 10. 3.*

That horse of superstition and Idolatry, upon the backe of which the devill
hath in former times made War against the Church, is slaine under him,
and now he is mounted upon a fresh horse of an other colour, called Li-
berty of opinion, falsely called Liberty of conscience; lets not be ignorant
of his devices. *Mr. Vines in his sermon before the Parliament, March the
tenth, 1646.*

LONDON,

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Daygett



To all those Members of the Church of
England, that doe frequent the Assemblies of
the separated Congregations to heare the
Ministers thereof.



Tis an usuall manner to dedicate books to persons of worth and qualitie, and in their Epistles to commend to the world the vertues of those to whom they write, but seldome or never do they mention any of their infirmities, which may be one reason why it is so hard a thing for a rich man to enter into the Kingdome of heaven. Now al-^{Mat. 9. 14.} though I write to many persons of great worth and quality, yet seeing their weaknesse occasioned my dedication, I shall mention none of their names nor vertues; but humbly beseech them in the bowells of love and pittie to their owne soules, and to the soules of others that are led by their example, to take heed whom they heare ^{for} ^{1 Ioh. 4. 1.} ^{2 Pet. 2. 3} *there are many false Prophets gone out into the world, Whose design it is to make merchandize of their hearers*, and they do most of all aime at those who are good prize, they care not much for a sheep that hath not a good fleece. Wherefore I beseech you be wise, you may be caught though you meane it not, God may give you up captive to error, for your vanity in forsaking his assemblies to heare those of the separation. Happily you resolve that you will not be caught, no more did *Dinab* intend to be defiled, when ^{Gen. 34. 1.} she went forth to see the daughters of the land; or *Peter* ^{2.} ^{Luk. 21. 55.} when he went into the High Priests hall. There is no man but will believe a lie, when God gives him up to delusion.

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lusion. One may be infected with the plague by looking in at the window; our nature is apt to receive impressions of error. It is observed of the sheep that they eat no grasse more greedily then that which rots them. Wherefore as a preservative against these teachers, come not at their assemblies; for as faith commeth in at the eare, so also herisie is received by hearing of false teachers; for were not seducing spirits so much heard and regarded, their pernicious wayes would not be so much followed. And by how much the more common such teachers are, by so much the more dangerous it is to be seduced by them. Time was when seducing spirits durst not appeare in publicke, but creepe into houses to vent their errors there; but now being too much favoured by authority, they have got such brazen foreheads, as they feare not to get into pulpits: and like craftie fishermen, that they may the more readily take the hearers, they baite their hook with such baites as are proper to the fish they would catch. Now the baite they use is that the Apostle *Peter* speaks of, *Liberty*. *2 Pet. 2. 18.* they promise them Liberty, which is the most taking baite that is, but what liberty is it? happily they call it Christian liberty, or liberty of conscience; but as the serpent beguiled *Eve* through his subtilty, when he said, ye shali be as Gods; so doe these deceivers those that give credence to them, for it is not liberty from sinne that they plead for, but liberty from the check and controule of superiours and their authoritie, despising dominion, and speaking evill of dignities, knowing that supream authority is an utter enemy to their liberty. And therefore what God threatens as a Judgement, they account it as their priviledge, because by that meanes, they have their desired liberty, for all sorts of sects and herisies (though in other things they be of contrary principles)

Rom. 10. 17.

1 Tim. 4. 1.

2 Pet. 2. 1.

2 Tim. 3. 16.

2 Cor. 11. 3.

Gen. 3. 5.

Iud. 8.

Hos. 10. 3.

Iudg. 17. 6.

Iud. 21. 25.

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ciples) yet in this they meet and concur, to have liberty to live by their owne lawes, to be unaccountable to others, and Independant : which liberry they must needs have, when there is no Magistrate to put them to shame. And is not that which the Prophet *Hosea* saith come to passe; *Their heart is divided, &c.* upon which text saith the English Annotations, their heart is divided, to wit, from God, who having taken away his spirit of peace and concord from them, hath given them over to seditions, factions, and frequent murders of their Princes, which will cause the utter ruine of the Kingdome. It follows in the third verse, For now we shall say we have no King, because we feared not the Lord; but marke what follows in the fourth verse, They have spoken words, swearing falsely, in making a Covenant; upon which text saith the Annotations (swearing falsely) to God, in promising him conversion and service, or to their King, obliging themselves to be faithfull to him. Nothing is more destructive to Church or State then to be without Governours, saith a reverend Divine in a sermon of his. In eighty yeares there did not arise amongst us so many horrid opinions and blasphemous heresies under Episcopacy (a Government decried as Antichristian) as have risen in these few yeares, since we have been without a government; and in those daies the errors that were, walked in darknesse, but in ours they out face the Sunne; then he demands, why doe all our Sectaries oppose the establishment of Government? and he answers, would the Wolves so earnestly desire the putting away of the dogs, were they not the safety of the flock?

But they will object, we speake not against the power of the Magistrate in civill matters, but we plead for liberty of Conscience in matters of Religion; may

Judg. 18. 7.

Hof. 10. 2;
3, 4.

Hof. 10. 3.

Hof. 10. 4.

Mr. Cran-
ford in his
sermon at
Paules in
London.
Feb. 1. 1645.
P. 47.

Object.

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we not worship what God we please, and how we please? no Magistrate in the world shall prescribe to us in this; so we walke peaceably and disturbe not the civill State, they are to looke no further.

Ans.

*Iob. 31. 26.
27. 28.*

To this I answer, that Magistrate who will rule with God must rule for God. *Iob* saith, If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moone walking in brightnesse; and my heart hath bin secretly inticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied the God that is above. It is not to be passed by that he saith this also, he had said of Adultery, verse 11. This is an heinous crime, yea it is an iniquity to be punished by the Judges; unto which and other sinnes formerly innume- rated, he addeth (this also) signifying thereby, that it should be the Magistrates care, to punish miscarriages in the worship of God, as well as the wickednesse commit- ted between man and man. I am sure it is the Apostles rule that we pray for Magistrates and all that are in au- thority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlinesse as well as honesty, therefore they ought to have power over us in matters touching the worship of God. It will be but a sad account for Governours at the last day to say, I was set over this people by God, and I have used my power to the utmost to keepe them in sub- jection to me, but I have taken no care to keepe them unto God, but have suffered every man according to the craft that is in them, to seduce and draw them away from God at pleasure. And (as a reverend Divine said to the Parliament) if conscience be warrant enough for pra- ctises and opinions, and liberty of conscience be a suffi- cient licence to vent or act them, I cannot see but the ju- dicatories either of Church or State, may shut up their shop,

2 Tim. 2. 2

*Mr. Vines
his sermon
March, 10.
1646. p. 60.*

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shop, and be resolved into the judicatory of every mans private conscience. But doe these men (having no power in their hands) grant that liberty to others which they have pleaded for themselves? I doubt it; and so much for answer to their objection.

Of old the seducers wore rough garments to deceive, Zach. 13. 4.
but now they come in sheeps cloathing, for they cloath Mat. 7. 15.
themselves with these titles, the godly and well affected party, but most commonly they call themselves saints, Rev. 22. 9.
a thing never heard of before. We reade of an Angell that called himselfe a fellow servant, but we never read Philip. 2. 3.
that any Christian called himselfe a saint. As it is the duty of every christian in lowlinesse of minde to esteeme others better then themselves; So it must needs be their sinne to esteeme themselves better then others: Yet this Mr Vines his sermon on Eph. 4. 14 15.
this is the practise of the deceivers in these daies, they undervalue and cast dirt in the face of all that stand in their light, (as one saith) this is an old way of insinuating into the people; the Wolfe perswades the sheepe that their shepheard feeds them to fleece them, that so they may the easilier worry them. They call our faithfull Pastors Antichrists ministers, Legall preachers, time servers, persecutors, and what not? The devill Gen. 3. 5.
must first asperse God to Eve, before he prevaile with her; and those popular preachers could not raigne at *Corinth* but by bringing *Paul* into disesteem if they could; For his letters (say they) are weighty, but his bodily 2 Cor. 10. 10.
presence is weake, and his speech contemptible. Its their preat pollicy to ingratiate themselves with their party, by disgracing others, that they may be counted the on-ly preachers; knowing that when once their persons come to be admired, their doctrine is readily received. And if any man speake against these mens sinfull practises.

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Mat. 7. 15. *Mr. Hodges*
in his ser-
mon *March*
10 1646.
P. 58, 59.

ses, and desire there may be a course taken to suppress them, that heresie and schisme may be prevented, they shall be told they speake against the godly party, and would you have godly men punished? But are Wolves any whit the more sheep because they cloath themselves in sheeps skins. Very wittily doth a reverend Divine, (in a sermon before the Parliament) check the folly of these men, by telling them of the Wolfe in the Fable, that he might not be suspected, but the more easily make his prey of the silly sheepe, put on a skinne of theirs: the shepheard discovers the guile, and hangs him up in his owne disguise, his fellow shepherds blame him for hanging the silly sheepe; to cleer himselfe from cruelty, he wishes them to open his skin, which having done, they easily discover that he was not mistaken as they conceived. I need not trouble you with making application, 'tis obvious to your view; to say he is an honest pious man, should be a foolish plea in case of abusing coine, theft, treason, or the like, and yet should it be of weight and force in this farre greater businesse and more horrid mischief? (a little after he tells them) that not to use their power to suppress this mischief, is to make themselves partakers of these mens sinnes and punishments.

Men are more eager to have murder punished than heresie; yet murther doth but destroy the body, heresie destroyes the soule. Now that you may not be intangled ay the soule destroyers of these times, I have writ this following treatise, as a preservative against the infection of their false doctrine; and in it I have endeavoured to describe false Prophets unto you by their titles and practices, that ye may beware of them and avoid them. And because separated Congregations are receptacles for such
tea-

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Teachers, and yet many will not be perswaded it is a sinne to frequent them; I have laid downe arguments grounded upon Gods Word, by which it appeares it is a sinne to goe to such assemblies, commonly the issue thereof is straying from the fould; but while we have good feeding at home, why should we not be kept from wandering abroad? And if what I have written, may be a meanes to recover wanderers, or to prevent wandering, I shall have my desired end. And although for pleading the truth, I expose my selfe to the rage and calumny of truths adversaries; yet is it my comfort, that I have not betrayed the truth of God by my silence. I had rather become mans enemy (for speaking the truth) then Gods enemy by my silence. Now that these my weake endeavours may be successfull for the end intended, is and shall be the continuall prayers of

Your servant for truths sake,

SAMPSON TOWNSEND.

B

A



A

Preservative against false Teachers.



S it is the greatest blessing that can come to a Na-
 tion, to have Pastors as Gods gift, according to
 his heart, which shall feed the people, with
 knowledge and understanding : So is it the Ier. 3. 15.
 dreadfulest judgement that can come upon a
 Nation, when the people therein, are not con-
 tent with the Pastors God have sent them, but will heape to
 themselves teachers according to their owne lusts : And this is 2 Tim. 4. 3.
 the sad misery of many in our Nation ; for the time is come, they
 will not endure sound doctrine, nor continue in the things they
 have learned, but are for new lights, and therefore their 2 Tim. 3. 14.
 Pastors are cast off ; and to satisfie their itching eares, the new 2 Tim. 4. 3.
 heaped up teachers, must be the onely men for them to heare,
 whose doctrine they take upon trust, beleeving every spirit, not
 trying them whether they be of God or no. It is a desperate 1 Ioh. 4. 1.
 madnesse, for a child to leave his Fathers family in which he
 was sure he was fed with good and wholesome food, and joyne
 himselfe with strangers, that feed him with poyson : And yet
 this folly is found in all those that neglect to heare the voice of
 Christs under-shepherds, that enter into his fould by the doore ;
 and follow strangers that never come in by the doore, but have Ioh. 10. 12.
 separated from the fould of Christ, and are by him reputed, as 3, 4, 5.
 thieves and robbers. When those Pastors which God hath made
 knowne he hath sent them, by giving seales to their Ministry, are
 yet

yet notwithstanding, not believed and loved, but slighted and neglected; it is just with God that those men should be given up to believe the strong delusions of those that runne, but are not of Gods sending, nor goe not of his errant. When Manna came to be loathed, then are the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt* desired. When sound doctrine will not be indured, then come false Prophets to be multiplied; And it is very just and equall with God, that those that will not be content with the food he sends them, should be satisfied according to their owne lusts, to their destruction.

Now as a preservative from the infection of those Teachers, that are for the satisfying of mens lusts, I shall first describe them unto you; And secondly I shall give you arguments against going to their Assemblies. For the first, I shall describe false Teachers, First by their Titles, Secondly by their practises.

1. They are called in Scripture false Prophets, *2 Pet. 2. 1. Mat. 7. 15.* False Apostles deceitfull workers. *2 Cor. 11. 13.* Hirelings forsaking their flocke, *Iohn. 10. 12.* Strangers whose voices are not knowne to the sheepe of Christ, *Iohn. 10. 5.* Wandering, (not fixed) starres. *Inde, 13.* Theeves and robbers, *Ioh. 10. 1.* Seducing spirits, *2 Tim. 4. 1.* Corrupters of the word of God, *2 Cor. 2. 17.* Stealers of the word, *Ier. 23. 30.* Lyers, *Rev. 2. 2.* Prophetiers of lies, *Ier. 23. 25.* Deceitfull workers, *2 Cor. 11. 13.* Beguilers of the people, *2 Pet. 2. 18.* Wresters of the law, *Zeph. 3. 4.* The divells ministers, *2 Cor. 11. 14, 15.* these with many other names are given unto them in Scripture.

2. Secondly, I shall describe them by their practises, they have departed from the true Church, so saith the Apostle, *1 Iohn 4. 1.* False Prophets are gone out into the world, and why doe they goe out? the Apostle *Peter* will tell you, *2 Pet. 2. 1.* there shall be false teachers among you that shall bring in damnable heresies, they goe out to bring these in, And as they bring in errors privily, (they being transformed as the Ministers of righteousness) so they bring them in slyly and cunningly. Their cunning craftinesse to deceive is excellently set forth by an excellent Divine of our times; saith he first, they use sophistical arguments and crooked questions, by which they puzzle and in-

snare.

2 Cor. 11.

15.

Eph. 4. 14.

McCransons

his sermon

on 2 Tim.

2. 17.

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maire the simple. 2. They use new and strange expressions, not to be understood but by their owne disciples. 3. They use faire and glorious speeches. 1. By representing their opinions as the waies of God, the secrets and mysteries of Christ. 2. By representing themselves teachers, followers, all under the notion of the most godly, holy, humble, saints, men as precious as any the earth beares, &c. 4. They use vain-glorious boastings, proclaiming the excellency and eminency of their knowledge and abilities above other men. 5. They use subtilty in concealing their opinions, save onely from their Profelites, to whom they discover them in part, and with a reserve of changing upon further inquiry or more advantage, And all this they doe to subvert soules, to carry men downe the streame of lust and liberty, and to bring them to swift destruction: They are full of cunning craftinesse, whereby they lie in waight to deceive, and many are deceived by them: They not onely cause divisions, but maintaine and uphold them; they doe not onely scatter, but destroy the sheepe of Gods pasture; they are subverters of households; they are unstable wresters of the Scripture; and the unstable are beguiled by them. Those that wil not endure to sit at the feet of a constant godly Ministry, but have itching eares and love to wander: do commonly choose these wandering starres for their guides. And no wonder, for these false teachers have such faire and plausible pretences, that if it were possible the very Elect should be deceived by them, (as our Saviour saith) *Mat. 24. 24.* It is a strange expression one hath in a Sermon to the Parliament, the devill laughs to see his worke goe forward, his Kingdome increase, his tares so readily entertained, by means of those whom he lookt upon as his most mortall enemies, therefore it is so many are deceived, because Satan in *Peter* is not easily discovered. When gilded pills convey poyson, under the notion of good phisicke, they may readily be taken. Wherefore as ever you desire not to be deceived by these Mountebanks, come not at them, for in so doing you countenance schisme, which by experience we have seen, have opened a doore to heresie; as a little thiefe creeping in at the window unlocks the gate for greater to let them in. And therefore what counsell *Solomon* gives to beware of the deceitfull strange woman, let me give to beware of those assemblies that

Rom. 16. 18

Eph 4. 14.

2. Pet. 2. 2.

Rom. 16. 17

Ier. 23. 1.

Tit. 2. 11.

2. Pet. 3. 16.

2. Pet. 2. 14.

Ier. 14. 10.

Iud. 13.

Mark. 13.

22.

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Pro. 5. 3.

8.

11.

12.

have 13.

have estranged themselves from the Church of God : Remove thy way farre from them, and come not nigh the doore of their house, lest thou mourne at the last, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my Teachers, nor inclined my eare to them that instructed me.

And so I am come to the second thing propounded : To give you Arguments against going to their Assemblies. And because it is Gods Word onely that must decide Controversies : I shall therefore ground my Arguments upon the Word of God.

The first Argument is grounded upon these Texts of Scripture. *Rom. 16. 17.* Now I beseech you marke them that cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. *2 Thes. 3. 14.* And if any man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. The Argument is framed thus :

The company of those that cause Divisions and Offences, ought to be marked, so as to be avoided, that the Offenders may be ashamed.

But they that seperate from the Church of *England*, doe cause Divisions and Offences, and the Teacher to such separated Congregations, is the chiefe upholder of them in their way of division and offence. Therefore it is a sinne to goe to their Congregations to heare such Teachers; for in so doing wee doe not avoid them that they may be ashamed, but encourage them, whereby they are hardened and imboldened.

2 Pet. 2. 2. The Major Proposition is undenyable to all that will not deny the word of God. The Minor Proposition I prove thus: By reason of such separations the Truths of God are evill spoken of, and rendred (in the Opinion of Carnall men) as a thing of so much uncertainty, that those who otherwise would imbrace it, are kept back : The weak Believers are scandalized and laid open to many Temptations; for while they looke upon such Persons as have separated from them as eminent for godlinesse, they question their owne standing, because they see they are rejected by them : and the greatnesse of the offences of this nature, may be ghest at by the woe that is pronounced against those by whom such offences come, *Matth. 18. 67. Mark 9 41. Luke 17. 2.* And as the weak Christian

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Christian is stumbled, so also is the strong Christian perplexed and troubled to see Gods Church so divided. The faithfull Ministers also from whom they have separated, are grieved and discouraged. By this meanes the mouths of Papists and Prophane persons, are opened against Religion: Doe we not know the charge of the Papists against the Protestant truth, because of division and errors? Wee formerly have been able to retort this by bidding them look at home, but now we must be silent. It is a sad thing to consider, how Gods truth is exposed to scorn and contempt, by the Divisions and separations that are amongst us. Surely these things moved the Apostle *Paul*, to that severe desire, *Gal. 3. 12.* I would they were cut off that trouble you. And thus it appears they cause divisions and offences; and therefore it is a sin to go to their Congregations to heare them; for in so doing wee doe not avoid them, that they may be ashamed, but incourage them, whereby they are hardned and imboldened.

A second Argument I draw from these Scriptures, *1 Thes. 5. 22.* Abstaine from all appearance of evill, *Ephes. 5. 7.* Bee yee not-partakers with them. *Revel. 18. 4.* Come out of her my people, that yee be not partakers of her sinnes, and that yee receive not of her plagues. *2 John 10. 11.* If there be any that come unto you and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evill deed. From which Scriptures I thus reason.

For a man voluntarily to hold communion with any in a sinful action, makes him guilty of his sin.

But to performe publique worship in a way of seperation from the true Church is an evill action.

Therefore to hold voluntarie Communion, with such separated Congregations, in their publique worship of prayers and preaching, brings us within the compasse of the guilt of their sinne of seperation.

The major proposition is clearly proved, by the scriptures upon which it is grounded: it is more then an appearance of evil to countenance and incourage false teachers, for it makes us partakers of their evill deeds. And to joyne with such assemblies as are not lawfully gathered, and to entertaine such teachers, makes us also guilty

2 Job. 10. 17
Rev. 18. 4.

Mr. Hodges
in his ser-
mon March
10, 1645.
p. 42.

guilty of their sinnes, for such Communion is not onely evill, but the caule of much evill: (as a reverend Divine said) A main cause and root of wicked mens blaspheming, or speaking evil of religion, is the following of seducers by multitudes, who pretend to truth, yet imbrace their pernicious wayes and errours.

The Minor proposition I prove thus: If to renounce the true Church, and seperate from it be a sinne; then to joyne worship with such as performe their worship in a way of seperation from the true Church, must needs be a sinne also: but the former is sinfull; therefore the latter must needs be sinfull.

A third Argument I gather from these Scriptures, *Rom. 10. 14, 15.* How shall they heare without a Preacher, and how shall they Preach except they be sent? *1 Cor. 12. 28.* And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, &c. Whence I frame this Argument:

We cannot with comfort heare those that are not sent of God to Preach to us; neither have wee any Warrant to attend those Ministers, as our Teachers, that God hath not set in his Church to be our Teachers. But the Ministers that have seperated from our Church, and taken the charge of a seperated Congregation, cannot be said to be sent of God to Preach to us, from whom they have seperated, neither are they Watchmen set over us to take the care of our soules.

1 Theſ. 5.
13.
Heb. 13. 17

Therefore we have no Warrant to heare them.

The Major is undenyable. I prove the Minor thus:

Those Pastors and Teachers God hath sent, and set in his Church, they continue in the Church to feed the flocke, over which God hath made them overseers, *Acts 20. 28.* But the Ministers of the seperated Congregations, have forsaken the flock, (over which some of them were overseers) and have denied them to be the Church of God: Therefore they are not the good Shepherds, seeing they leave the Sheep to the Wolfe to scatter them. But are they not rather such Wolves as the Apostle *Paul* prophesied of? *20. 29, 30.* who should arise out of the Church, not sparing the flocke, speaking perverse things, to draw Disciples after them; not caring how the flock of Christ be scattered, so their Disciples may be multiplyed. These scatterers of the Sheep of Gods pasture, are not the true Pastors of Gods sheep; And therefore not to be heard.

Jer. 23. 1.

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A fourth Argument, I gather from these Scriptures, 1 Cor. 10. 32. Give no offence neither to the Jewes nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God, Rom. 14. 21. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drinke wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weake, 1 Cor. 8. 13. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. 2 Cor. 6. 13. Whence I thus reason :

Whatsoever it is, that gives just cause of Offence to the Church and People of God is a sinne, and to be avoided.

But hearing of the Ministers of the seperated Congregations, doe give just cause of offence to the Church and People of God.

Therefore it is a sinne to heare the Ministers of the seperated Congregations.

The Major Proposition is undeniable. I prove the Minor thus :

Those that doe approve of, and countenance and encourage any in a way of Separation from the true Church, do give just cause for the Church to be offended.

But those that goe to heare the Ministers of the seperated Congregations, in so doing, doe approve of, and countenance and encourage them in their way of seperation.

Therefore they give just cause of offence to the Church and people of God.

The Minor Proposition of this Argument, I prove by the example of the Apostle *Paul*, Acts 22. 20. who for his standing by, when *Stephen* was stoned, and keeping the rayment of them that slew him, is brought within the compasse of the guilt of *Stephens* death ; for this he calls a consenting to his death. By which it appeares, that our presence, amongst an unwarrantable society, without our reproofe or dislike, argues our approbation of them, and consent with them. For as it is the commendation of a People to become followers of the Church of God : So is it the sin of a People to be followers of those, that have caused divisions in, and seperated from the Church of God ; For these it is their duty to avoid them, to have no fellowship with them, that they may be ashamed : for the way of seperation is a pernicious way ; And by reason of the multitude of the followers of those wayes, the way

Acts 7. 58.

1 Thes. 2. 13

Rom. 14. 17

2 Thes. 3. 14

2 Pet. 2. 1.

way of Truth is evill spoken of: And they that are in the way of seperation are strengthened and encouraged, and weak Christians that are out of the way are stumbled and offended: For thus they argue; If gathering together to worship God, in a way of seperation from the Church of *England* be evil, why do the members of the Church of *England* flock to such Assemblies? This Argument prevailes with too many, although it have no force in it: For it is fore-told that such Teachers shall have many followers; and therefore (many times) the devils Chappels are fill'd, when Gods House is empty; which gives just cause of offence to the Church. Therefore their Assemblies ought not to be frequented.

2 Pet. 2. 2.

A fitt Argument I gather from these Scriptures, *1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.*

1 Tim. 5. 17.

And we beseech you Brethren to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work sake. *Phil. 2. 29.* Receive him therefore in the Lord, with all gladnesse, and hold such in reputation. *Heb. 13. 17.* Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your soules, as they that must give account, that they may doe it with joy; for this is profitable for you. Whence I thus reason:

It is our duty very highly to esteem, and readily to obey those Ministers, that are set over us, to admonish us, and to take care of the good of our soules.

But to heare those Ministers, that are not set over us, that have not taken the charge of our soules, but have seperated from our Congregations; Is not highly to esteem and readily to obey those Ministers that are set over us, &c.

Therefore it is a sinne to heare such Teachers.

The Major Proposition is undeniable. I prove the Minor thus:

To do contrary to the Admonitions, Cautions, and Instructions of the faithfull Pastors of our Church, that are sent by God to us, and are set over us, to take care of our soules; is to despise them in their worke, and therefore not to esteem them highly for their worke sake.

But to heare the Ministers of the seperated Congregations, is to doe contrary to the Admonitions, Cautions, and Instructions of our faithfull Pastors.

Therefore in so doing, we do not obey them, but despise them.

The

A Preservative against false Teachers.

9

The Major Proposition is proved by the words of our Saviour Christ, *John 13.20.* Verily, verily I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me, &c. *Matth. 10.40.* and *Luke 10.16.* He that heareth you heareth me, and hee that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. By which Scriptures it appeares, that hee that will not hearken to obey the voice of Gods Messengers, is a despiser of them: as yet further appears in *2 Chron. 36.16.* *Num. 15.31.* *Prov. 13.13.*

I prove the Minor Proposition thus: Our faithfull Ministers, (as those that watch over us for the good of our soules, and because many false Prophets are gone into the world) do daily admonish us to beware of false Teachers, to take heed we bee not deceived by them, and led away with their errors. And knowing that the Assemblies of the seperated Congregations are the Shops, or Warehouses, in which all the errors of the times are held forth and vended; they are very jealous over us, lest we should goe to them, and be seduced by them: For by sad experience it is found true, that those that refraine not their feet from wandering from their Pastors, to heare such Teachers as have wandred from the Church, are commonly given up (in a spiritnall manner) to the judgement. God threatens against *Moab*, *Jer. 48.12.* I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander. So these wandering stars, will cause them to wander that follow them. Wherefore we are admonished not to goe after them, but to void them: And therefore if we heare them, we doe contrary to the Admonitions, Cautions, and Instructions of our faithfull Pastors: And in so doing wee do not obey them, but despise them; and in despising them, we despise not man (onely) but God also.

Heb. 13.17.

1 Joh. 4.1.

Mat. 7.15.

Mat. 24.42.

2 Pet. 3.17

Jer. 14.10.

Jude 13.

Mat 24.26.

1 Thes. 4.8.

I might adde more Arguments: As that it is directly contrary to our Solemne League and Covenant, wherein we have Sworne to endeavour uniformity in Church Government, & the extirpation of Heresie and Schisme.

As also I might take up that argument those of the separation use, for their not hearing of our Ministers, and prove that we have the same argument for us not to heare them; their argument is this: It is unlawfull for a member of a particular Church of Christ, to heare those teachers that are no members of any particular Church of Christ; and therefore they of them that walke up to their principles, will not heare any of the Ministers of the Church of *England*, because they account them no members of any particular Church of Christ. But being confident, that those that will not regard the word of God upon which the former arguments are grounded, will not regard.

*Object.**Answ.*

gard oaths and covenants, or any other arguments that may confute them I shall therefore answer two or three objections, and draw to a conclusion. Some may object, there are some of the Teachers to the seperated Congregations that are holy and godly men, may I not heare them? I answer, the more is to be lamented, that such men should be the devills instruments, to cause divisions, spread errors, and hinder the work of reformation; but their godlinesse is not a sufficient warrant to heare them. Godly men may prove seducers, because the most excellent men are subject to erre and be deceived. *Peter* one of the chiefe Apostles, seduced *Barnabas* by his seperation and dissimulation; and by his example the Jewes learned to dissemble also. *Gal. 2. 12, 13.* The finnes of teachers, are the teachers of sins, therefore walke by rule and not by example without rule.

Object. There are many Rulers and great men go to their Congregations.

Answ. I answer, that's the cause their Congregations are so full; when Rulers become auditors to false teachers, all that are under them will be ready to follow them. Great mens faults goe as seldome unaccompanied as their persons; the Apostle *Paul* would not have any follow him but as he followed Christ. *1 Cor. 11. 1.* And if we follow Rulers without that limitation, we may follow them to our perdition.

Object. There are many wise and godly men that (although they goe not themselves yet) will suffer their wife, children, or servants to goe, and if it were so sinnesfull, surely they would not suffer it.

Answ. I answer, I am sure that such men how wise, and godly soever they may seeme to be, yet they love not the soules of their Family, well as God requires. Would they in time of a Plague, suffer their wife, children, or servants, to goe into a house infected? Never was there any Pest house more dangerous to the body, then the assemblies of seperated Congregations are to the soule; for the infection of false teachers is the worst of all plagues. I read of a strange story (told to the Parliament) that fell out at *Hammell* in *Saxony*, viz. That there came one in the shape of a piper in a patcht pide coat, who when he had first piped, made all the mice and rats, leave their holes and follow him out of the towne; but when he came againe and piped, troopes of the Citizens children followed him dancing, till comming to a mountaine not farre from the City, the mountaine opened, and neither he nor they were ever seen after. Hath not this pide piper Heresie, perhaps, led thole that are neere and deare unto you, you know not whether; what a sad sight will it be to see thy posterity in hell through thy negligence.

Mr Hedges
sermon

March 10.

1646. p. 36.

37.

Mat. 24. 24.

To conclude, There are many seducing spirits in the Kingdome, who with their poysonous doctrine infect their hearers; and they are so cunning and crafty in deceiving, that if it were possible the very elect should be deceived by them. Would you have your soules preserved from the infection of their false doctrine, make use of this preservative, come not to the places of their resort. Would any man that would be kept from the plague, voluntarily goe into the houses that are infected; You have heard Gods call from the seperated Congregations: ye have not the least warrant from God to goe to them; will you yet notwithstanding follow them? Take heed of tempting God, and falling into the snares of the devill.

FINIS.

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